**The Man From Snowy River**

***The Man from Snowy River*** is a 1982 Australian film very loosely based on the Banjo Patterson poem [*The Man from Snowy River*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_from_Snowy_River_(poem)). The film had a cast including Kirk Douglas in a dual role as the brothers Harrison (a character who appeared frequently in Paterson's poems) and Spur, a prospector, Jack Thompson as Clancy and Tom Burlinson as "Jim Craig" (The Man). Sigrid Thornton plays Harrison's daughter Jessica, Terence Donovan plays Jim's father Henry Craig and Chris Hayward plays Curly.

**Plot summary of the film**

The film opens with Jim Craig and his father Henry discussing their finances. A herd of wild horses called the Brumby Mob passes by, and Henry wants to shoot the black stallion leader - but Jim convinces his father to capture and sell them. The next morning the mob reappears and Henry is accidentally killed. Before Jim can inherit the station, a group of mountain men tell him that he must first earn the right – and to do so he must go to the lowlands and work.

Jim meets an old friend called Spur - a one-legged miner. Jim then gets a job on a station owned by Harrison, Spur's brother, on a recommendation by Harrison's friend [Banjo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjo_Patterson) Patterson. Meanwhile [Clancy of the Overflow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clancy_of_the_Overflow) appears at Spur's mine and the two discuss their pasts and futures. Clancy goes to Harrison's station to lead a cattle muster. At dinner, Harrison tells Clancy that "he has no brother" when referring to Spur.

Harrison organizes a round-up of his cattle, but Jim is not allowed to go. While the others are gone, Harrison’s daughter Jessica asks Jim to help her break in a prize colt. The mob appears again, and Jim unsuccessfully gives chase on the valuable horse. When Harrison returns, he sends Jim to bring back 20 strays. Later Harrison learns of Jim's actions - he tells Jessica that he's fired and that she will be sent to a women's college. Impulsively, she rides off into the mountains where she is caught in a storm.

Spur, meanwhile finally strikes a large gold deposit. Jim finds Jessica’s horse and rescues her. She tells him that he's going to be fired, but he still leaves to return the cattle. Jessica is surprised at meeting Spur, her uncle, who she had never been told about. She is also confused when Spur mistakes her for her dead mother, and refuses to tell her anything about their past.

After returning, Jessica learns that Spur and Harrison both fell in love with her mother, Matilda. She declared that the first to make his fortune would be her husband. Spur went looking for gold, while Harrison bet his life savings on a horse race. Harrison became rich overnight when the horse he bet on, Pardon, wins. Having made his fortune, Harrison and Matilda wed, but she died while delivering Jessica. Harrison is grateful to Jim for returning his daughter, but he becomes angry when Jim says he loves her. As he leaves, the prized colt from old Regret is let loose by a farmhand in the hope that Jim will be blamed.

Later, while camping out, Spur tells Jim that he is set to inherit his father's share of the mine. Clancy joins them and informs them of the colt, but Jim refuses to retrieve the animal. Meanwhile, Harrison offers a reward of ₤100, attracting riders and fortune-hunters from every station in the area. Clancy does eventually show, accompanied by Jim, who Harrison finally allows to join the hunt.

Several riders have accidents in pursuit and even Clancy is unable to contain the brumby mob. The riders give up when the mob descends a seemingly impassable grade. However, Jim goes forward and returns the horses to Harrison’s farm. Harrison offers him the reward but he refuses. Having cleared his name, Jim would like to return some day for the horses and, looking at Jessica, "anything else that's mine." He rides back up to the mountain country, knowing that he has earned his right to live there.

**Comprehension-**

**After viewing the film, read Banjo Patterson’s poem *The Man From Snowy River.***

1. Explain what a brumby is.
2. The colt from old regret is worth a thousand pounds. How much is this? See if you can find out how much this would be in today’s money.
3. Who was Clancy of the Overflow? Find out why he was such a legend in Australian folk lore. Why do all the other men respect him so much? (Look at the second stanza of the poem)
4. Make a summary of the events of the poem in two or three long paragraphs. What has been added to the film to change the story? What has been left the same?
5. Why did the men think that the unknown rider from the Snowy Mountains shouldn’t ride after the colt and the other brumbies. (Look at stanza four)
6. How did he turn out to be a hero?

**Australian Identity**

1. This story shows how many Australians in the late 1900’s saw themselves- tough bushmen, brave, resourceful and able to overcome the odds. Do Australians still see themselves with these qualities?
2. What qualities do modern day Australians see themselves as having?
3. Today 40% of Australia’s 23 million people were either born overseas or had one or both parents born overseas. Explain how this fact might change the way Australians see themselves. (Think about the ways people are shown in the Qantas advertisement)
4. Explain what *Multi-culturalism* is. How might this help to define what an Australian is?
5. Find out what you can about, and explain the ANZAC legend. The idea of *Mateship* is important in this idea. How important is mateship in how Australians see themselves today?